

VOLUME XXV, NUMBER 5 • 25c PER COPY • JANUARY 1959

social action



TOWARD RACIALLY INCLUSIVE CHURCHES

Galen R. Weaver

• Allen Hackett

social action

January, 1959

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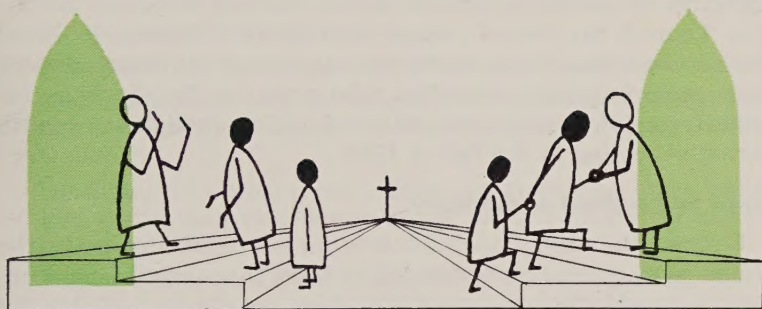


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• **Subscriptions**, \$2.00 per year; \$3.75 for two years; \$5.00 for three years; five or more yearly subscriptions to one address at \$1.50 each; single copies, 25c. 10 to 99 copies at 20c; 100 or more copies at 15c. Editorial and Subscription Offices, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York • Copyright, 1959 by the COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION.

• **Social Action** is published monthly except in June, July and August by the Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ, which continues the work of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches and of the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. *Chairman*, HENRY C. KOCH; *Vice-Chairman*, PERCY L. JULIAN; *Director*, RAY GIBBONS; *Associate Director*, HUBER F. KLEMME; *International Relations*, HERMAN F. REISSIG; *Racial and Cultural Relations*, CHESTER L. MARCUS and GALEN R. WEAVER; *Field Secretary*, F. NELSEN SCHLEGEL; and *Publications*, FERN BABCOCK • OFFICES: 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York and 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio • *Publication Office*: 10th & Scull Streets, Lebanon, Pa. • Re-entered as second class matter August, 1957 at the Post Office at Lebanon, Pa., under the act of March 3, 1879.



Racial practices in CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

This article-review gives highlights of the study of racial practices and policies in local Congregational Christian Churches in standard metropolitan areas of the U.S.A. The report entitled "Fellowship for Whom?—Racial Inclusiveness in Congregational Christian Churches" was written by Herman H. Long and is available from the CCSA or the Board of Home Missions, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y., for 50c per copy.

For more than a decade, meetings of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches have called upon their members to work for "a non-segregated church in a non-segregated society." The purpose of the self-study of local church practices and policies was to discover what progress has been made toward achieving this goal.

By Galen R. Weaver, Secretary for Racial and Cultural Relations, Council for Christian Social Action and Board of Home Missions, Congregational Christian Churches.

Dr. Herman H. Long, Director of the Race Relations Department of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches, supervised the survey and wrote the report. The Council for Social Action and State Conference Social Action Committees cooperated with the study by securing more than three hundred volunteers who went to the churches for interviews. Information was gathered during an eighteen-month period beginning in the fall of 1956.

Scope and method of the study

Because the most important frontier of racial change in the U.S.A. is in cities, it was decided to limit the study to churches located in standard metropolitan areas, as determined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. These areas are defined as "counties or groups of contiguous counties in which there is at least one city with 50,000 or more inhabitants."

There are 5,294 Congregational Christian churches in the U.S.A. Fifteen hundred of them are situated in standard metropolitan areas in 41 states. Interviews were held with officials of 1,054 churches in 38 states, or 70.3 per cent of the total.

Separate interviews were held with the minister and with one church officer. The interviewer read the questions and recorded the replies on forms. Information in the study is based wholly upon replies given by these ministers and church officers. Questions dealt with the following subjects:

Location of church and type of church.

Changes in location of church and whether race was a factor in the change.

Membership of the church.

Dominant socio-economic and educational level of church membership.

The presence of Negro, Oriental, Spanish-speaking, and Indian-American persons living within a mile radius of the church.

Membership and attendance of these groups in the church.

The participation of the minority group persons in the boards and organizations of the church.

Knowledge as to whether members of these groups have sought membership in the church and whether they were accepted or rejected.

Opinions of ministers and officers as to the effect of accepting minority group persons upon the life of the church.

The policy of the local church, if any, regarding the acceptance of other racial and cultural groups.

Awareness of the minister and officer of General Council policy.

Opinions of ministers and officers as to whether "Christian commitment" obligates one to accept and work for an integrated local church.

Opinions of ministers and officers as to whether they believe that segregation in community life violates "Christian commitment."

Personal data about the minister and officer—age, sex, marital status, place of birth, area of longest adult residence, and occupational background.

Characteristics of the Churches

Before considering racial practices, it is important to understand the general characteristics of the churches studied:

TYPE. Community churches which serve an area larger than the immediate neighborhood predominated (434 churches or 41.6 per cent). The second largest group was the neighborhood church (320 churches or 30.7 per cent); and the smallest group was the downtown church (208 churches or 19.9 per cent).

LOCATION. The largest number (488 or 46.6 per cent) of the churches studied were situated in the central city of their metropolitan areas; 389 churches or 37.2 per cent were in secondary towns; 137 churches or 13.1 per cent were in unincorporated areas; and 32 churches or 3.1 per cent were in other areas.

DOMINANT SOCIAL CLASS. When asked to indicate the social class to which a majority of the members of their churches belonged, the ministers replied as follows: "middle class," 620 churches or 61.6 per cent; "upper and upper middle," 191 churches or 19 per cent; "lower middle and lower," 128 churches or 12.7 per cent; and "mixed," 67 churches or 6.7 per cent.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS. The range in membership was from less than 50 (36 churches) to between 3,000 and 4,000 (2 churches). The largest number of churches had between 100 and 300 members (335 churches); while 219 had between 300 and 500 members; 129 from 500 to 700 members; 92 from 700 to 1,000 mem-

bers; 110 from 1,000 to 2,000; and 16 from 2,000 to 3,000. The estimated total number of members in the 1,015 churches which replied to this question is 528,800.

Further light is shed on the churches studied by a computation of averages. The "average" church has 520.9 members; church attendance of 225; a church school enrollment of 241.7 children; a home expense budget of \$23,410; and a benevolence budget of \$3,529.

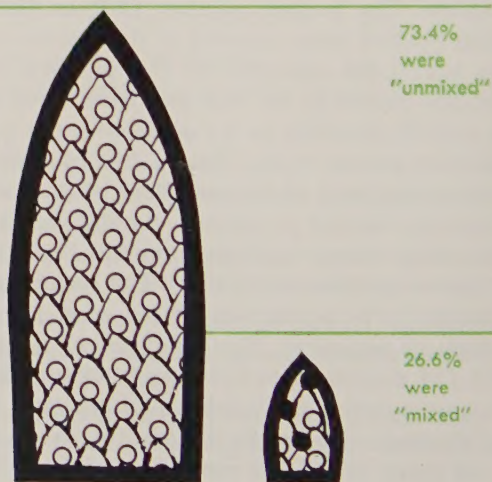
Characteristics of the ministers

All of the ministers, except four, were male. Their average age was 46; they had an average of 15 years of pastoral experience; and they had been in the churches they were then serving for an average of 6½ years. The majority of them were born in the East or Midwest and had lived the greater part of their lives in these regions.

Racial composition of church membership

The ethnic groups included in the survey were white, Negro, Oriental, and Spanish-speaking. While the last is not a "racial" but a "cultural group," attitudes of exclusion and discrimination

OF 1005 CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES



operate toward them in much the same way as toward the others. Indian Americans were also included but the number involved—only 68 persons in the entire sample—was so small that it was not significant statistically.

While many of the churches are located in neighborhoods that are all white or all Negro, the average percentages of members of minority groups living within a one mile radius of the churches are: Negroes, 8.7 per cent; Orientals, 1.3 per cent; and Spanish-speaking, 1.9 per cent. The average percentages of the members of these groups in the churches studied were: Negroes, 2.2 per cent; Orientals, .3 per cent; and Spanish-speaking, .1 per cent.

How many of our churches include members of other than the dominant ethnic group? Churches were classified as "mixed" if one or more of their members was of other than the dominant racial or cultural group. Of the 1,005 churches replying to this question, 26.6 per cent were "mixed" and 73.4 per cent had members of only one group. The distribution follows:

All white	69.6%	White, mixed, but	
All Negro	2.9%	no Negroes	12.1%
All Oriental	0.7%	White, mixed, with	
All Spanish	0.2%	Negroes	12.1%
		Negro, mixed	2.1%
		Oriental, mixed	0.3%
	<hr/> 73.4%		<hr/>
			26.6%

The study reveals some significant differences between the churches of the East, the West, the South, and the Midwest. Those located in the West have the largest percentage of predominantly white memberships with one or more minority group persons included—31.9 per cent. The corresponding percentages for churches in the East and Midwest are 27.5 per cent and 21.9 per cent, respectively. The percentage in the South is the lowest, as might be anticipated. Nevertheless, there were two churches in the Central South Conference (white), three in the Southern Convention (white), and five in the Convention of the South (Negro) that indicated that they at least have policies which are not exclusive of persons of other races. No white church, however, has a Negro member. Nine predominantly white churches in the Middle Atlantic Conference (New Jersey, Delaware, and the District of Columbia) have Negro members.

NUMBER OF CHURCHES AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF SELECTED
MINORITY GROUPS BY REGION AND CONFERENCE

Region and Conference	All Churches	Churches with Members who are:			No. of Members who are:		
		Negro	Oriental	Spanish	Negro	Oriental	Spanish
All	1,054	158	131	39	11,618	1,558	578
<i>West</i>	168	27	42	14	851	1,058	349
N. Calif.	55	9	12	2	575	353	15
S. Calif.	60	9	17	10	239	217	328
Colo.	10	0	1	1	0	3	3
Ore.	16	2	2	0	11	11	0
Utah	3	1	2	0	3	153	0
Wash.	24	6	8	1	23	321	3
<i>East</i>	386	65	41	10	2,382	286	99
Conn.	47	13	7	3	803	18	8
Maine	9	1	0	0	8	0	0
Mass.	204	31	19	1	1,015	201	8
N. H.	5	0	1	0	0	3	0
Penna.	23	1	2	0	3	5	0
R. I.	14	5	2	1	33	18	65
N. Y.	84	14	10	5	520	41	18
<i>South</i>	140	36	11	5	4,261	34	76
Cent. So.	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conv. of So.	27	27	0	1	2,828	0	3
Fla.	14	0	3	2	0	8	68
S. E. Conv.	11	0	2	0	0	5	0
S. Conv.	32	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mid. Atl.	48	9	6	2	1,433	21	5
<i>Midwest</i>	360	30	37	10	4,124	180	54
Ill.	110	9	13	6	2,746	55	38
Ind.	21	1	1	0	3	3	0
Iowa	9	1	0	0	3	0	0
Kan.	17	0	2	0	0	11	0
Mich.	66	3	5	0	1,115	31	0
Minn.	11	1	4	0	3	28	0
Mo.	8	1	3	0	8	13	0
Neb.-S. D.	15	1	0	1	3	0	8
Ohio	84	9	6	2	158	31	5
Wisc.	19	4	3	1	85	8	3

Comparison with the study of 1946

When L. Maynard Catchings inquired about the racial inclusiveness of Congregational Christian churches in 1946, he found that 17 per cent of the churches had one or more members of races other than the dominant one. His findings were based on a mail response from 1,519 churches, both rural and urban.

If 17 per cent of the urban and rural churches which were inclusive in 1946 can be compared with 26.6 per cent of the metropolitan churches of this study, 9.6 per cent more churches include persons of more than one race today than did so 12 years ago. Since the 1,054 churches of this study are more urban than those studied by Mr. Catchings, the actual gain probably is somewhat less. In any case there is no cause for complacency. During the years 1946-1958, many aspects of our common life have moved towards inclusiveness of all races—the armed services, professional sports, and employment, for examples. It seems that the churches have moved more slowly in this direction.

Racial policies of local churches

Nearly half of the 1,054 churches had no guiding policy, either informal or officially voted, in regard to receiving members of another race. Approximately 38 per cent had a policy and of these 72 per cent favored open membership while the policies of 28 per cent were restrictive.

Ministers of 954 churches gave their opinion as to whether—regardless of the presence or absence of policy positions—their churches are actually open to persons of all races. Nearly half thought that they were, and a little more than half were either doubtful or believed their churches to be exclusive.

Seventy-one per cent of the 1,054 pastors said that their churches had never confronted a situation that required a decision on admittance to membership of persons of a race different from that of the present members.

Should churches develop a policy on racial inclusiveness in membership? Lack of a policy puts the burden on the minister and officers to “follow their own consciences” or to estimate how far the congregation will allow them to go when the issue arises. The endeavor to reach consensus affords an opportunity for growth in Christian grace and understanding, if it is carefully planned, in the context of Biblical and theological truth.

Resolutions of the General Council

Since 1946, each meeting of the General Council has called for racial inclusiveness in all aspects of the Church's life. It has called the act of segregating others on the grounds of race or color "a sin." Yet, when the ministers and lay officers were asked if they knew whether the General Council had a policy and what it was, they were surprisingly uninformed. Approximately 77 per cent of the 1,054 ministers knew that there was a policy. However, only about 46 per cent of these could give a clear idea of its content; 26 per cent were either vague or incorrect in trying to summarize it; and about 27 per cent had no knowledge of the content. The 946 lay officers were considerably less aware of the fact and the substance of the General Council resolutions: 24 per cent said they knew that there was a policy, but only 13 per cent of these could give a coherent idea of what it said; 7 per cent were vague or inaccurate, and 80 per cent had no knowledge of the content.

It is clear that there is much to be done in communicating the carefully wrought statements of our deliberative assemblies to both ministers and laymen.

Participation of minority group members

Do members of the minority group share in the responsibilities and opportunities of church life? The findings of this survey indicate that if any are members they are well represented in the organizations of the church and participate in a wide variety of its activities. A number are teachers and youth advisers.

However, members of minority groups do not fare so well in employment by churches. Very few Negroes or Orientals are employed by the church in other than maintenance positions. They are rarely employed as secretaries, parish workers, directors of Christian education, ministers or associate or assistant ministers.

What effect does integration have on churches?

The study indicated that when minority persons were accepted as members the life of the church was strengthened in approximately 38 per cent of the cases and that it remained about the same in nearly 62 per cent of the cases. In .8 per cent the effect was negative. When asked about how the number of members

had been affected, nineteen churches reported as follows: three had permanent losses (the numerical loss was 60 members, almost all in one church); eight had temporary losses, later regained; and eight had permanent gains in the number of members.

Support for work toward integration

One of the questions asked church officers was: (a) whether the officers of the church would support their pastor in active efforts to encourage the membership of minority persons and (b) whether he or she would do so. To section (a) of this question, 63.4 per cent said "yes"; 17.1 per cent said "no"; 16.9 per cent were uncertain, and 2.6 per cent did not answer. To section (b), 80.7 per cent said "yes"; 10.1, "no"; 8.0 were uncertain; and 2.2 did not answer. Thus the lay officers interviewed consistently rated their fellow church officers below themselves in support of the pastor.

Similar questions were asked in regard to activities of their pastor toward eliminating segregation in the community. The same officers thought that their pastors would have greater support for activities towards desegregation in the community than in their own churches. Dr. Long speaks of this as "the most negative finding of the study."

Conclusion

This study provides timely and challenging insights into the problem of racial inclusiveness in local congregations. It is both reassuring and disturbing. While modest gains may have been made since 1946, they are incommensurate with the nature of the gospel and the true mission of the Christian church. Undoubtedly residential segregation is a large and, in some cases, a determinative factor in keeping so many of our churches monoracial. However, "the proportion of Negro, Oriental, and Spanish-speaking members is in every case considerably lower than their percentages of the population within a one-mile radius of the churches." There are various other inhibiting factors, such as the presence and strength of churches made up of minority group persons and economic and educational differentials.

Obviously much remains to be accomplished in persuasion, conversion, education, and courageous action at all levels of our Fellowship.



Let us worship Him *together*

Allen Hackett, Minister of the Pilgrim Congregational Church in St. Louis, Missouri, records his reflections after reading the report, "Fellowship for Whom?—Racial Inclusiveness in Congregational Christian Churches."

The appropriate word after reading Herman Long's sobering report, *Racial Inclusiveness in Congregational Christian Churches*, is: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." There are hopeful signs. When Maynard Catchings made a survey in 1946 he found that one church in six among his respondents included in its membership one or more persons of a race different from that of the majority of the church—i.e. 17 per cent of the churches were racially inclusive. The present survey, however, shows that in 1956 and 1957 one church in four (26.6 per cent) was racially inclusive. The percentage gain is 10 per cent in ten years, or 1 per cent per year. (O Lord, how long?) We can, of course, tip the figures around another way and say

that we now have 147 per cent more inclusive churches than we had ten years ago. Another encouraging fact is that minority membership tends to be real, rather than token. That is to say, minority group members are making their way into positions of responsibility in church life. As membership provides a more significant token of acceptance than attendance, just so leadership betokens more complete acceptance. The final hope is that each person will be accepted by his fellows as he is by Christ himself, and given opportunities to serve in accordance with his gifts in the spirit of First Corinthians, twelve.

Support for integration by church officers

One of the most significant findings of the Long report is the degree to which the ministers can count on the personal support of the lay officers who were interviewed. It is quite true that these laymen thought of themselves as ahead of their boards. It is also true that the ministers would tend to select for these interviews such persons as they had reason to trust. Even with these qualifications noted, the fact remains that eight out of ten of the key laymen would go to bat in support of their ministers if they were actively evangelizing members of minority groups. Regionally, this works out a bit differently, but again more solidly than one would expect off-hand. Six out of ten lay officers in the South, seven out of ten in the Midwest, and nine out of ten in the East and the far West would give their personal support. If "One with God is a majority," then a single officer and a dedicated minister ought not to be as timid as some of us have been! We may not have Elijah's "seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal," but neither do we have Jezebel!

Few persons experience integrated worship

The survey reminds us, in its darker aspect, of the slowness of our progress, and it highlights the relatively small number of persons who are actually experiencing integrated worship (2.7 per cent, or less than three out of a hundred).

It sobers a former chairman of the Resolutions Committee of a General Council to realize that only three out of every four ministers and one out of every four officers are aware of the General Council's often-repeated declarations in favor of "a non-segregated church in a non-segregated society." When we drink

the pure water of inspiration at the well of our corporate wisdom, we seem to be like Jack and Jill in the nursery-rhyme, spilling our pail of water on the way home—or at least a quarter of it! And another half evaporates before the laymen get to drink of it!

We are grateful for the realistic tone of the report when it considers the gains and losses in membership as a result of racial inclusiveness. A football coach was speaking at our Rotary Club just after he had come to a new job. He hedged against all contingencies by remarking that when a coach is winning he talks a lot about the value of the game in building physical fitness and citizenship. But when his team is losing, he speaks of the value of sportsmanship! In the same vein, the Long report wisely refrains from promising gains in membership because a church is integrated. In the case of Pilgrim Congregational Church, St. Louis, we lost heavily from the core of our officer group and we are still far from experiencing a great influx of convinced and committed people. But the group that remains is disciplined and dedicated beyond anything I have seen in any church. Members who have been out of the country for a time testify to clear changes for the better in the spiritual life of the church. When Martin Luther stood at the Diet of Worms he could not see a great group of people joining a church that would bear his name, but he *had* to say: "Here I stand, God helping me. I can do no other."

May churches be as inclusive as buses

The saddest thing about the report is not in the text. It is the fact that such a report has to be made at all! I used to say in Honolulu that I hoped our church might become as racially inclusive as a Honolulu Rapid Transit Company bus! To the extent that our congregations are monoracial when our cities are multi-racial, to just that extent we are recreant to our Christian duty.

Christ died for us all. We cannot imagine Jesus on the cross looking out over the crowd and saying: "I am dying for you and for you, but not for you!" If he died for us all, why can we not worship him together, and "break bread *together* on our knees"?

Our imperative comes not only from the Gospel itself. It also comes from the puzzled and expectant people of our country, and even more from the people of South Africa and Asia. They look

to America for moral as well as technical leadership. Little Rock can cancel out Point Four. In our generation we have seen integration take place in sports, in the armed forces, and more recently in the schools and the buses. Residential segregation and segregation in churches and clubs remain! What a damaging admission! If we really lived from the inside out—ideals dictating conduct, and conduct transforming environment—then our Christian commitment would transform the world in which we live. In the days before the Civil War the churches *did* arouse the conscience of the nation. John Woolman began pleading with his fellow Quakers to give up their slaves while George Washington was measuring the woods and fields of Virginia with his surveyor's chain. Can those of us who read Herman Long's report ponder it and do as John Woolman did? His call to repentance began with himself. We, too, know that "judgment begins at the house of the Lord."

FRANCIS W. McPEEK

1910-1958

Francis W. McPeek died of a brain tumor on November 7, 1958. He was Industrial Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action from 1947 to 1953. He came to the CSA with unusual experience in social work, prison and reform school chaplaincies, and interdenominational work. He brought an alert and disciplined mind, and quickly became informed about labor-management relations, unionism, housing, race relations, and a wide range of political and economic issues. Above all, he had deep Christian convictions. His commitment to the church continued after he left the CSA. In addition to the heavy load he carried as director of the Commission on Human Relations for the City of Chicago, he served as interim pastor in several churches in the Chicago area.

Contributions to a Memorial Fund, to be used for the education of Francis McPeek's sons, may be sent to Professor Victor Obenhaus, Chicago Theological School, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

—RAY GIBBONS

These churches experience racial inclusiveness



Rural churches take the lead

BARNET LARGER PARISH, *Barnet, East Barnet and McIndoe Falls, Vermont*. The parish consists of three churches with a combined membership of 160. Christian social action is a significant part of its work. To make meaningful the theme "Christ, the Church, and Race" it carried out these projects:

It presented "The A Capella Ensemble" in a concert of spirituals and folk songs. Members of this Negro choir from Boston were housed and fed in parish homes.

It brought to the parish The Bishop's Company of Santa Barbara, California, which presented with a bi-racial cast a dramatization of Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*. Members of the cast were housed and fed in parish homes.

It brought four Negro children from the Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York to the parish for vacations of two weeks.

It invited Rev. Galen R. Weaver of the Council for Christian Social Action to preach on "Christ, the Church, and Race" at a Sunday morning service of worship.

The Pilgrim Fellowship had several meetings on the theme, using materials from the Anti-Defamation League. It discussed prejudice, using a leaflet entitled *Vegetables and People*. The Pilgrim Fellowship and the women's groups listened to and discussed phonograph records from the ADL, *Stories to Remember*.

—JOHN F. ANDERSON, Minister

Minority members chose the church

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, *Seattle, Washington*. Being a church in the heart of a large cosmopolitan city, Plymouth Church has had no problem of integration. For years the Boys Club of Seattle was housed in Plymouth Church and Chinese, Japanese, and Negro boys were members. It was only natural that they join our Church School.

Because many of our members are engaged in public school education, business, and professions in which racial barriers do not exist, they have readily received as members Negroes, Japanese, Filipinos, and others. These members have been treated as any others; they have been received into our circles, become regular attendants at our colony meetings, and have participated in all aspects of the church's life.

These folks of minority races have sought Plymouth because of its program, its work, and its fellowship. They have chosen us, and we are glad. For a long while we have had a Negro soloist in our choir; a Filipino is one of our ushers; an Eskimo sings regularly in our church. Some of our best educated and most loyal members are from minority races.

If there is any secret to our success in integration, it is that we treat the members of minority groups just as we treat all others of God's children.

—MARTIN L. GOSLIN, Minister

An integrated church, from its beginning

ST. MARK'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, *Milwaukee, Wisconsin*. St. Mark's was organized in 1953 as a mission congregation in a newly developed subdivision in northwest Milwaukee. Before the first worship service, invitations were extended to the residents

of the area. Negro children attended church school the first Sunday. Near St. Mark's is a low-cost public housing project with 726 apartments. Five years ago the Negro population in it was 23 per cent; today it is 12 per cent. Negro families are now scattered across the entire city of Milwaukee, including many areas around St. Mark's. A large number of our first members, both Negro and Caucasian, came from the public housing project. Today, however, the members come from a much larger area.

In the first months of the church's existence the question was asked, "What about Negroes' coming to St. Mark's?" Synodical officers explained that the official position of the Evangelical and Reformed Church was "an unsegregated church in an unsegregated society." The local lay leaders accepted this position as their own. There has been no effort to change this policy. A few who joined the church in the first year or two left the membership when they realized that St. Mark's would continue indefinitely as an integrated church. Our present membership is 288 and the church school enrollment is 354.

Our integration is thorough. Negroes become members with all the usual responsibilities and privileges. They attend the services of worship and participate in the church school, Churchman's Brotherhood, Women's Guild, all three Youth Fellowships, and the Scout troops. Several Negroes teach in the church school. A Negro Scout leader is responsible for the organizing of our Cub Pack.

St. Mark's views itself as a normal mission congregation bearing witness to the truth of the gospel: "It is the power of God for salvation to *everyone* who has faith" (*Romans 1:16*).

—EUGENE SCHNEIDER, Minister

Serenely and unostentatiously color blind

FIRST CHURCH, CONGREGATIONAL, *Cambridge, Massachusetts*. Several factors are in our favor. This is a university community. This does not mean that the community is free from prejudice and discrimination. It does mean that people and influences stream in from the ends of the earth, placing bigotry at a disadvantage.

Another advantage is the character of the population in the immediate neighborhood of our church. Within a radius of two miles there are many Negro families whose children find it easy

and natural to attend our church school and whose parents, if made to feel at home, attend services. In this favorable situation there is real opportunity for a church to grow, quietly and steadily, in Christian character and inclusiveness.

Over the years our church has had a tradition of creative worship and of social concern. Individuals have been nourished in this tradition and, in turn, have contributed to it. For instance: there is the woman who was a leading spirit in the church school. From a privileged background, she is, in the very fiber of her being, democratic and Christian. In her ministry to the families of our cosmopolitan neighborhood she was serenely and unostentatiously color blind. Through her influence Negro children were brought into our church school and Scout troops; their parents were invited in and made to feel at home. At length there was a Negro among the church school teachers; later, a Japanese. Finally some of the parents responded to the invitation to become members. In the church choir there were several Negroes and in every group of ushers there were one or more Negroes. Throughout the years a gospel of Christian inclusiveness was being preached from the pulpit. A Christian Citizenship Committee took part in the community-wide effort against discrimination in housing. Our community presents an opportunity for a degree of inclusiveness which shames our complacency. Nevertheless, the growth has been real and steady.

—JOHN H. LEAMON, Minister

A people trying to be Christian

MT. HOLLYWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, *Los Angeles, California.* We have always felt that it was not necessary to speak of our church as integrated: it was enough simply to say we were "trying to follow Jesus." Not that we ever succeeded but we kept aiming in that direction. When someone asks, "How many Negroes are in your church?" the answer is: "We don't think of that. Our church members are not classified according to skin color." If that sounds pious, self-righteous, and a little arrogant, so be it. The point is that for a long time now we have been seeing one another simply as people attempting to grow together in a more living relationship with Christ.

The church school helped make the process a natural one. Nearly twenty-five years ago a fifteen-year-old boy told me he

wanted to join the church. A year later, when two or three of the church girls were being criticized for dancing in the church with this young man, I went with him for a walk up Mt. Hollywood and said: "You're a member of our church. If you marry a white girl we'll stand by you. But don't you think that you should be getting acquainted with girls of your own race? If you marry outside of it there will be pressures that will make your marriage unnecessarily hard. There will be difficulties, probably, with relatives. It will be anything but easy for your children. We want you to think about this."

During the war he was a technical sergeant on tough assignments in Europe. Seated by his mother in church the first Sunday after he got back he was asked to speak to the congregation. From the pulpit he said: "It's good to be back, but I see the faces here of two of my friends who were killed." (Their photographs were in the sanctuary.) He could say no more. God gave him during that brief time the power that has never been given to anybody in our church before or since; the power to communicate with overwhelming clarity the sorrow of youth, irrespective of race or nation, over the needless tragedy of war. The congregation had an unforgettable and transforming experience of that communication of the Spirit that the early church called Pentecost. We have never, fortunately, recovered.

That young man is now a deacon. His marriage to a lovely Negro girl was celebrated in the manse. That is why we think of our church, not as interracial or integrated, but just as people trying to be Christian.

—ALLAN A. HUNTER, Minister

Ministry to a changing neighborhood

SALEM EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH, *Buffalo, New York.* Established in 1873, in a German speaking section of Buffalo, Salem reached its peak before World War I and then declined steadily as its members moved away. Now it stands on an invisible line dividing a Polish Roman Catholic Settlement from a section increasingly populated by Negroes from the South.

In 1953 it was evident that Salem had four choices: (1) sell to a Negro congregation and move away; (2) merge with another E & R church; (3) disband; or (4) develop a ministry in Christ's name to the inhabitants of the neighborhood, particularly the Negro Protestants. After much thought and prayer, it was de-

cided that Salem's major responsibility, now as it had always been, was to the immediate neighborhood.

In the summer of 1954 a Bible school attracted a Negro boy who stood outside, not sure whether he would be welcome. One of the teachers brought him in to class and he became a symbol of the need for the ministry of Jesus Christ. A Negro woman was asked to organize after-school activities for the Negro children in the area. Because Salem had decided to welcome all who professed Jesus as Lord and Savior, the Board of National Missions and West New York Synod voted to help Salem employ a second full-time staff member.

Efforts were made to draw interested persons in the community together to discuss and act upon such problems as police protection, better lighting and housing rehabilitation. A program of week-day religious education was started in a nearby school. A day nursery was begun for three- and four-year-olds. The facilities of a neighborhood settlement house were used. A program was started for junior highs on a nearby playground.

The first Negro adult member of the church was received in 1956. She had been unchurched for many years and was greatly in need of the fellowship of Christ. Ten Negroes are now members. Enrollment in the church school increased from fifty to one hundred twenty; in the Bible school from sixty to one hundred fifty. Negroes sing in the choir, teach in the church school and Bible School, and work on building repairs.

A spot-check of people living around the church indicates that Negroes believe that the church is "open" to them. Again and again it has been emphasized that our ministry is *not* to Negroes alone but to all unchurched Protestants or nominal Catholics who live in the parish area. Continuous house-to-house surveys are conducted to find those whose connection with a church is minimal.

Contrary to popular thought, Negroes, especially men and youth, are forsaking the church. As families move from the impoverished rural South to the industrialized urban North, roots are yanked out which are not quickly planted again. Our Negro members tell us that a major reason why they move north is to escape the degradation of being second-class citizens. What an opportunity the church has to fulfill its dreams of common sharing and worship! Salem is discovering what it means to be a

fellowship of reconciliation in a time when barriers are still high.

Some rumblings of discontent are heard. A few members would rather close the doors than radically reorient themselves to a community ministry. But many have been reborn as Christians as they have agonized over the problems of integration, and participated in this new interracial community of love. Again and again, in the midst of despair over human pettiness and prejudice, the Holy Spirit has broken through, filling us with a new sureness that the faithful church has available to it the very power of God.

In evaluating the progress of the past few years, several conclusions may be drawn:

- A church is primarily responsible for its immediate parish area and the people who live within it.
- The program of a church in an interracial urban neighborhood is the same as for any church anywhere.
- A beginning can be made with only a few deeply committed sympathetic laymen who understand the true purpose of the church.
- Opportunities for expressing doubts and fears and hostility and prejudice must be available constantly. Much "talking out" needs to be done.
- Pastors and members of such churches must be prepared to be misunderstood but they will discover the ever present power of God in Jesus Christ sufficient to overcome all obstacles.

—HOWARD FULLER, Minister

Education and action toward integration

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, *Palo Alto, California*. There was some readiness for action on race relations in the church when I came to it in 1947. My "trial sermon" indicated that the church should be active in accepting social responsibility, particularly for ending all forms of racial discrimination.

A small but vital Social Education and Action Committee proposed that the church invite the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Negro) to be our guests at dinner during Brotherhood Week. Later the Negro church reciprocated.

The SEAC polled the members of the church on attitudes toward persons of different races. About 85 per cent of the responses favored the church's making its position known as desir-

ing to be a place where people of all races could worship and work together. The Church Council drew up a resolution setting forth this position and submitted it to the membership for a secret ballot vote. The following resolution was approved:

That the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, in accordance with its understanding of the spirit and teachings of Jesus, will seek to be an inclusive fellowship wherein peoples of the various racial and class backgrounds can worship and experience Christian fellowship together. It asserts its conviction that to bar any person because of race, class, or religion from any job, school, housing area, hotel, restaurant, fountain, resort or place of public recreation or entertainment or to refuse commercial, medical, dental, legal, or other service to any person because of race, class, or religion, is to deny both the Christian and the democratic faith. Accordingly this church favors active cooperation with the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the General Council of the Congregational and Christian Churches, and other appropriate national, state, and local organizations in working for a non-segregated church in a non-segregated society and calls upon its individual members to conduct their private, professional, civic, and social activities as those who reject discrimination. (May 16, 1948.)

The resolution, printed in large type, hangs in the entrance hall of the church.

A few months later the SEAC initiated the bringing to the community of an exhibit of original portraits of outstanding Americans of Negro extraction. The church school made use of prints and told stories of many of the persons whose portraits were displayed. The custodian of the exhibit, a very attractive Negro woman, preached in our church during the visit.

The next year, 1949, the pastor of the A.M.E. Zion Church spoke for us, and I for them at the Brotherhood Sunday service.

Members of our SEAC have participated quite regularly in community interracial activities, housing conferences, the Council on Intergroup Relations, etc. The information has spread that we are really interested in "working for a non-segregated church in a non-segregated community."

As Oriental and Negro families moved into town and were not affiliated with local churches, they heard of us. Some were already Congregationalists. They came. They were welcome.

—G. ARTHUR CASADAY, Minister

Citizens' committee

for fair housing

Newton, Massachusetts. Early in 1958, the possibility that a new turnpike would displace twenty Negro families in the community and a long-time concern for "open-occupancy" housing combined to bring together thirty-five interested citizens. We met in the home of a charming Negro family. Several racial and religious groups were represented, with a large number of persons from our Second Congregational Church and the Myrtle Street Baptist Church. We discussed the opportunities for fair housing for members of minority groups. We found that restrictions against Jews had been removed after five years of effort, but that discrimination was still practiced against Negroes. The Mayor's Commission on Human Relations had been of some help, but had moved very slowly, for both practical and political reasons.

It was decided that a group concerned about fair housing was needed. True neighborliness was advanced in that one evening by our eagerness to work together to transform the situation. Our mutual respect and trust increased. A Steering Committee began to plan an open meeting for the whole town, at which a panel of "experts" would help more Newton residents understand our problem and opportunity.

Meanwhile, the Social Action Committee of the Second Congregational Church invited the Executive Committee of the Church to meet with it to discuss the subject of fair housing. Members of the leadership panel included two realtors who were members of the church, a lawyer, a banker, a Negro mother

whose family would have to find new housing, a popular Negro teacher, and a brilliant young Negro scientist who could not find housing in Newton but was happily settled in Lexington. The honesty and fine spirit of the panel and the frank discussion which followed enabled the leaders of our church to increase their understanding, sympathy, and sense of Christian responsibility. The Executive Committee voted to send a letter about this new opportunity to all church members.

Meanwhile, an open meeting was held at the Newton Community Center, at which another able panel discussed the subject and answered questions. This panel included a high school social studies teacher, a Jewish human relations expert, a former state senator, a grade school teacher, a parent, Dr. Myron W. Fowell of the Congregational Christian Conference, and Dr. Paul Deats of the School of Theology of Boston University. Although only forty Newton citizens responded, each one offered to work on one of the several committees. At this meeting, the Citizens' Committee for Fair Housing was named and given form.

At the next meeting of the Steering Committee, officers and committee chairmen were named. We have co-chairmen for each office, one from the majority and one from the minority group. The committees include the following:

- A committee on public awareness.

- A committee to list buyers and sellers.

- A reconciliation committee.

- A finance committee.

- A committee to work with realtors.

- A committee to work with the Turnpike Authority.

Already we have a buyer and a seller, and are taking the next steps, which will include visits to the neighbors by members of the Reconciliation Committee.

Although we are just beginning, we hope that the Citizens' Committee for Fair Housing will help Newton to become more nearly "a garden city of brotherly love" with open occupancy, American plan. Already our Congregational Church is greatly enriched by including in its membership several families from the minority groups, with whom it is a privilege to share all our services, activities, and friendship.

—MRS. ROSS (MARY) CANNON



Stride Toward Freedom, by
Martin Luther King, Jr. Har-
per and Brothers, 1958, \$2.95.

Martin Luther King tells the Montgomery story in simple but gripping words. He vividly describes the walk for freedom and the people who walked. The description of his return to Alabama after schooling in the North gives a good setting for the step-by-step unfolding of this, the first large-scale use of nonviolence on this continent.

America had never seen such a large group of Negro Americans work together in this fashion. The Negroes had real questions about this method of protest, but seemed to know that this time it was "now or never." Some "looked upon nonviolence as weak and compromising"; others "felt that they could be nonviolent only if they were not attacked personally." Dr. King continued to emphasize the first of the six basic aspects of his philosophy of nonviolence: "It must be emphasized that non-violent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist."

As the pilgrimage toward freedom progressed, Dr. King was threatened by mail and telephone, but he continued to live by his basic philosophy:

- Nonviolence does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding.
- The attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing this evil.
- Nonviolent resistance is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back.
- It avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit.
- It is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice.

Even while in jail and when his home and some churches were bombed, he held to the beliefs expressed in the above principles.

December 20, 1957, will long be remembered by the participants in the Montgomery bus strike. Desegregation on buses had come at last. Now was the time to prepare for this new day. Dr. King says, however: "In spite of all our efforts to prepare the Negroes for integrated buses, not a single white group would take the responsibility of preparing the white community." He tried to get the white ministers' alliance to make a simple statement calling

for Christian brotherhood but the majority "dared not get involved in such a controversial issue."

The method used in preparing Negro passengers for their first rides on the desegregated buses is described very clearly in the chapter, "Desegregation at Last." Role playing was used to train the victorious passengers in nonviolent techniques. The theme of these sessions was "We must not go back on the buses and push people around unnecessarily, boasting of our rights. We must simply sit where there is a vacant seat."

This stimulating story of people united for first-class citizenship is well told. The opportunity for knowing this youthful, dedicated minister of the gospel is one no American should miss.

—MAMIE E. DAVIS, Correlator
Eastern Region, YWCA of
the U.S.A.

Segregation and the Bible, by
Everett Tilson, *Abingdon*
Press, New York, 1958, 178 pp.
\$2.50.

Many segregationist leaders base their position upon the Bible. Dr. Tilson has listened carefully to their arguments and has answered each one, out of the wealth of his knowledge as Professor of Biblical Theology at the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University. While sound scholarship pervades the book, it is easy to read.

Christians in Racial Crisis: Little Rock and Its Churches, by
Ernest Q. Campbell and
Thomas F. Pettigrew, *Public*
Affairs Press, Washington.

This book, soon to be published, is based on a survey of the reactions of one hundred Protestant ministers and two rabbis in the school crisis in Little Rock. It describes the "Pushers," eight ministers and two rabbis who actively supported integration; the "Powers," seven highly influential ministers who were relatively inactive; and the eighty-five "Passives" who did not participate in any way.

What's Right with Race Relations, by *Harriet Harmon Dexter*, *Harper & Brothers*, New York, 1958, 248 pp. **\$4.00.**

Mrs. Dexter has given several hundred examples of improved race relations in education, employment, housing, transportation, and other aspects of American life.

Where Shall We Live? *Report of the Commission on Race and Housing*, *University of California Press*, Berkeley, **\$1.50.**

This book gives an excellent summary of the present situation concerning racial discrimination in housing; recent action toward removing racial barriers; and recommended action for the Federal Government, Federal-local programs, state governments, local governments, the housing industry, and inter-group relations organizations.



The Broken Mask, 16 mm. sound film; 28 minutes; color, \$12.00; black and white, \$8.00. Available from the St. Louis, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago offices of the Bureau of Audio-Visuals.

Our lives are complicated by the masks that we wear which keep us from knowing ourselves or each other. This discovery comes in a very intense way to Paul Brannon, the central character in the film *The Broken Mask*. This is an excellent film for use with youth and adult groups.

Synopsis

Paul goes to a summer youth conference in which he is thrown into close contact with a Negro, George Tower. Paul rejects him, but when it is necessary to remove a white plaster mask from George's face, he volunteers to do so. This experience breaks the mask of prejudice which each boy wears.

In the fall after this conference George and Paul become students in the same college, where they expect to continue their friendship. They encounter severe prejudice on the part of Paul's girl, his family, and his church.

Suggestions for use

The film is especially useful in digging deeply into personal feelings because it is open-ended. It does not answer the significant questions which it raises. It is equally usable for youth and adult groups; it is important to do more than merely show the film.

The use of discussion or buzz groups following the presentation of the film will enable viewers of the film to discover and analyze their own masks. Questions which groups might be asked to discuss are: "How would you write the ending of the film's story? Why? How did various persons in the film feel? Why did they react as they did?"

A "spot panel" chosen at random from the viewing group or a panel alerted ahead of time might offer reactions to the film.

An examination of the Biblical basis for action with regard to racial integration in the churches follows naturally a showing of this film.

(Prepared by EDWARD A. POWERS, Christian Education Division, Board of Home Missions, Congregational Christian Churches, Boston, Massachusetts.)



TOWARD RACIALLY INCLUSIVE CHURCHES

All churches, South, North, East and West, are involved in the struggle to free America from bondage to the sin of racial prejudice. What can the church do to eliminate the racial barriers in its own life? Among the steps that the social action committee will want to consider in developing its plan of action are:

Evaluate the findings of the study

Read Galen R. Weaver's article-review of *Fellowship for Whom? — Racial Inclusiveness in Congregational Christian Churches*, pages 3 to 11; and "Let us Worship Him Together" by Allen Hackett, pages 12 to 15. What do these articles indicate about the racial inclusiveness of our churches? Why is the percentage of persons of minority ancestry in our churches so much smaller than their proportion within a one-mile radius of the churches? (Negroes—8.7 per cent in the area, 2.2 per cent in the churches; Orientals—1.3 per cent in the area, .3 per cent in the churches. See page 7.) What values are lost for the 97 per cent of our members who worship in churches whose members are of one race only?

Analyze the church and its community

Is the church open to all persons, regardless of race, color, and national origin, who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord? Are persons of minority ancestry active in the church? What proportion of the population, within a one-mile radius of the church, are Negro, Oriental, or Spanish-speaking? What proportion reside within the county or metropolitan area of which the community is a part?

If Negroes, Orientals, or Spanish-speaking peoples are moving into the community, discover their religious affiliations. About 44 per cent of all Negro Americans are church members. Most of them belong to Protestant churches. Ninety per cent of all Negro Protestants belong to five separate Negro bodies: National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. (4,557,416 members); National Baptist Convention of America (2,608,974 members); African Methodist Episcopal Church (1,660,301 members); African Methodist Episcopal Zion (760,158 members); and Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (392,167 members). Can Negroes be made to feel at home

in the churches of the community or will it be necessary for them to form new churches of their own?

What are the attitudes of members of the church toward individuals of other racial and cultural groups? What relation do they see between Christian faith and their racial attitudes?

Interpret the meaning of race

Help members of the church to understand the learnings of biology, psychology, and anthropology about racial differences and similarities. Help them understand the bearing of Christian faith on racial attitudes. Sermons, meetings of the official boards, the church school, meetings of youth, laymen and laywomen all provide opportunities for deeper understanding of the meaning of race.

Among the resources available from the CCSA are:

Racial Integration in the Churches and in Housing, a packet of resource pamphlets and program guides. \$1.00

Sense and Nonsense About Race by Ethel J. Alpenfels, a pamphlet which gives simple explanations of the findings of biology, psychology, and anthropology about race. 50 cents.

The Kingdom Beyond Caste by Liston Pope, a book which gives historical and religious perspective on race relations, scientific data, and suggestions for strategy. \$1.25.

Some groups may wish to study the books reviewed on pages 26 and 27. *Stride Toward Freedom* by Martin Luther King, Jr., would be the basis for a stirring book review.

Churches in monoracial communities have particular responsibility for helping their young people prepare for living in a multi-racial society. The experience of the Barnet Larger Parish indicates what they can do. (See page 16.)

Provide for personal encounter

Most Negro and white Americans know each other only in worker-supervisor relationships. The church has many opportunities to help fellow-Christians meet one another. Study the experiences of other churches (pages 16 to 23) for ways of bringing groups together across racial lines.

Move toward inclusive membership

The church may wish to follow a program of education with the adoption of a policy of racial inclusiveness as did First Congregational in Palo Alto (page 22). It may wish to welcome children into the church school program, and then invite their parents to attend church and become members, as did Salem Evangelical and Reformed in Buffalo (page 20). In any case, it will want all members to participate fully in the whole program of the church.

—FERN BABCOCK



THE CHURCH AND GOD'S PEOPLES

Scripture

Micah 6:6-8

Psalms 8

Luke 6:20-36

Philemon 1:4-20

Hymns

All People That on Earth
O Worship the King
We Bear the Strain of Earthly
Care
O Jesus, Master, When Today

Prayers

Prayers for Social Justice, pp.
377-382, *A Book of Worship for
Free Churches*.

Prayers for Brotherhood and
Justice, pp. 47-8, *The Pilgrim
Hymnal*.

A Litany

Leader: Blessed be the God
and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ.

People: We adore thee, O God,
and praise thy holy name.

Leader: We confess that our
ways have not been thy ways,
and our thoughts have not been
thy thoughts.

People: Have mercy upon us,
O God, and refresh our spirits.

Leader: For thy holy church
which thou hast founded
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: We give thee thanks,
O God.

Leader: For the love it has
shed abroad and for the good
news it has proclaimed,

People: We give thee thanks,
O God.

Leader: We confess that too
often our congregations have de-
parted from thy will and the
fellowship of thy love.

People: Have mercy upon us,
O God, and refresh our spirits.

Leader: Forgive us, O God,
when we name thee father and
thy peoples as brothers when we
worship thee, but deny thee and
them in our daily lives.

People: Have mercy upon us,
O God, and refresh our spirits.

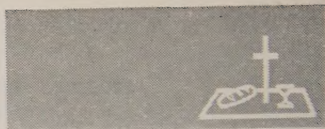
Leader: Forgive us, O God,
when we deny thy love for all
peoples in our churchmanship.

People: Have mercy upon us,
O God, and refresh our spirits.

All: Quicken within us the re-
solve to accept Jesus Christ as
the head of the church and to
make the church one fellowship
of love throughout the world.
Amen.

(Prepared by JAMES H. LIGHT-
BOURNE, JR., Superintendent of
the Southern Convention of
Congregational Churches, At-
lanta, Georgia.)

social action calendar



JANUARY 18-24

Church and Economic Life Week, sponsored by the National Council of Churches.

FEBRUARY

United Church of Christ Month of Emphasis on Christian Social Action.

FEBRUARY 3-6

Churchmen's Washington Seminar, Washington, D. C.

FEBRUARY 5-7

Meeting of the Council for Christian Social Action, Buck Hill Falls Inn, Cresco, Penna.

FEBRUARY 8

Race Relations Sunday.

APRIL 7-9

United Church of Christ Washington Seminar, Washington, D. C. Fern Babcock, Leader.

JUNE 22-26

West Coast Christian Social Action Institute, White Memorial Retreat Center, Mill Valley, Calif. Galen R. Weaver, Dean.

JUNE 23-JULY 31

European and Middle East Travel and Study Seminar: France, Italy, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Greece, Switzerland, and England. The Rev. and Mrs. Herman F. Reissig, Leaders. Cost: \$1640.

JULY 13-17

Midwest Christian Social Action Institute, Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wisc. Chester L. Marcus, Dean.

JULY 20-24

Central Christian Social Action Institute, Congregational Center, Lisle, N. Y. Ray Gibbons, Dean.

JULY 27-31

Eastern Christian Social Action Institute, Congregational Center, Framingham, Mass. Myron W. Fowell, Dean.

AUGUST 6-25

Mexican Seminar. The Rev. and Mrs. F. Nelsen Schlegel, Leaders. Cost from Mexico City, \$295.

For information write the Council for Christian Social Action.

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